MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

12 NOVEMBER 1982

Lebanon

Tyre Explosion -- An explosion devastated the Israeli military headquarters in Tyre early on 11 November, killing at least 26 people and wounding many others, Jerusalem radio reported. Noting that the building housed Israeli military and security personnel and also contained some Palestinian detainees, the radio said around 50 Israeli personnel were still trapped under the debris on 12 November. Rescue operations continued while the IDF cordoned off the area and searched for suspects, according to Jerusalem and IDF radios. Jerusalem radio stated that Israeli Defense Minister Ari'el Sharon has ordered a commission of inquiry to investigate the explosion. Meanwhile, a self-styled "Armed Struggle Organization" sent a statement to AFP in Beirut claiming responsibility for the blast, Beirut radio reported. The organization warned that further operations will follow.

Israel

The head of the IDF intelligence chief's office, Lt Col Moshe Hevroni, told the commission of inquiry into the Beirut massacre that Defense Minister Sharon's aide, Avi Duda'i, must have lied when he testified that throughout 17 September he received no reports of irregular activities in the Sabra and Shatila camps, IDF radio reported.

PLO

Delegation in Moscow -- A PLO delegation met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko in Moscow on 11 November, TASS reported.

Recognition Issue -- The PLO representative in Saudi Arabia has denied an Egyptian report that the PLO has announced its readiness to accept UN Resolution 242 recognizing Israel in return for the right to participate in peace negotiations, AFP reported. Meanwhile, Palestine National Council Chairman Khalid al-Fahum said the PLO will "entirely reconsider" its attitude toward Israel if and when the latter changes its attitude toward the Palestinians and grants a place for them, according to another AFP report.

Egyptian Invitation -- The Egyptian Government has invited PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to pay an official visit to Egypt, Beirut radio reported, citing the Qatari paper AL-'ARAB.

Reaction to Brezhnev Death

While most Arab countries have already sent condolences to the Soviet Union on the death of Leonid Brezhnev, monitored Israeli and Iranian media have not thus far reported any official condolence messages from Israel or Iran to the Soviet Union. Several condolence messages were sent from Syria, including one from President Hafiz al-Asad, and Syrian authorities have declared an official 7-day mourning period, according to reports by Damascus television and SANA. Other condolences included messages from Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, Saudi King Fahd, Jordanian King Husayn, the amir of Kuwait, and PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat, according to INA, SPA, Amman radio, Kuwait radio and TANJUG.

GCC Summit

The final communique of the GCC Supreme Council meeting in Manama declared that the six GCC leaders have approved the recommendations of their defense ministers, which aim at building the strength of GCC member states and coordinating among them to achieve self-reliance and protect their security. However, no final agreement was announced on the proposed comprehensive security agreement. Instead, the GCC leaders acceded to their interior ministers' request for further discussion and study of the issue, the document

stated. The communique, which was read out at the final session of the GCC summit by GCC Secretary General 'Abdallah Ya'qub Bisharah and broadcast live by Manama television, also noted that the GCC leaders consider Iran's thrust into Iraq a threat to the Arab nation. Reaffirming GCC support for Iraq, it called on Iran to respond to peacemaking efforts.

Regarding Gulf economic affairs, the communique said the first stage of the economic integration agreement will come into effect on 1 March 1983. The GCC summit authorized the establishment of a Gulf investment corporation with capital of $2.1 billion, it added. The GCC leaders decided to hold their fourth summit in Qatar in November 1983.

Bahraini Foreign Minister Muhammad ibn Mubarak Al Khalifah subsequently said in a news conference broadcast by Manama television that the GCC countries are prepared to carry out any possible role to resolve the Iran-Iraq war. Noting that the Fes Arab League summit conference adopted a clear resolution on the joint Arab defense agreement, Al Khalifah said an Iranian threat to Baghdad should be discussed by the Arab League. Earlier, INA cited the Kuwaiti daily AL-WATAN as stating that the GCC has decided to form a high-level delegation to try to end the war. If Iran rejects the GCC mediation mission, the GCC countries will call for an Arab summit to authorize implementation of the joint Arab defense pact, AL-WATAN asserted.

Regarding membership of the GCC, Secretary General Bisharah revealed in an interview with the Bahraini daily AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ that the GCC is currently considering the admission of other Gulf countries to the council, WAKH reported.

Iran-Iraq War

Military Situation -- An 11 November Iraqi military communique broadcast by Baghdad radio claimed that Iraqi forces routed an Iranian attack in the Maysan area, killing 887 Iranians and allowing the Iraqis to move forward and occupy new positions. Earlier, Tehran radio said the Iranians had retaken 35 square km of Iranian territory from the Iraqis and had captured further territory in the north of Iraq's Zubaydah oil region.

Jordanian Diplomacy -- The Iran-Iraq war was among the subjects discussed by Jordanian King Husayn and Saudi King Fahd during a brief visit to Saudi Arabia by Husayn, Amman radio reported. Earlier, the Jordanian prime minister conveyed a message from King Husayn to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn in Baghdad, the radio noted.

Iraq

President Saddam Husayn, in a 9 November address to the Cabinet transmitted by INA, warned that a "fifth column" is disseminating rumors inside Iraq aimed at weakening the morale of the people. He went on to criticize "some members of the Revolution Command Council" who have expressed concern about the fate of traitors. Referring to the execution of a government minister who authorized the import of harmful medicine, Saddam Husayn warned that those who occupy high positions should not expect mercy when they make mistakes. He exhorted his ministers to economize in their departmental expenditures. The Iraqi leader also challenged the Iranian rulers to a mutual referendum contest, held under international supervision and free from interference, to see which regime and head of state has the most internal support.

DAILY REPORT

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CONDOLENCE SENT TO USSR ON BREZHNEV DEATH

LD111718 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1530 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] On the death of L.I. Brezhnev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, the PDPA Central Committee, the DRA Revolutionary Council Presidium and the DRA Council of Ministers have sent the following message of sorrow and condolence to the CPSU Central Committee, USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium and the USSR Council of Ministers.

To the CPSU Central Committee, USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium and USSR Council of Ministers:

Dear comrades,

With sadness and profound sorrow, we received the news of the sudden death of Leonid I. Brezhnev, general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, the pursuer of the great path of Lenin and the firm struggler for peace and prosperity for all mankind.

L.I. Brezhnev, as a true friend of Afghanistan, idefatigably looked after the the consolidation and development of friendship and all-round cooperation between the Afghan and Soviet people. We always felt his great heartfelt warmth and his friendly interest concerning our country and revolution during our meetings with him.

L.I. Brezhnev, as a true internationalist, rendered outstanding services to the strengthening to revolutionary solidarity with great strength and energy.

The memory of these [word indistinct] of Leonid Brezhnev will never be forgotten and will eternally live in our hearts.

Dear comrades, accept our deepest condolences at this great loss for the CPSU and the Soviet people and all progressive mankind.

[Signed] The PDPA Central Committee, DRA Revolutionary Council Presidium, and DRA Council of Ministers

ENVOY CALLS SALANG TUNNEL REPORTS 'PURE FANTASY'

LD102032 Hamburg DPA in German 1747 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Excerpt] Mainz, 10 Nov (DPA) -- Afghan Ambassador in Bonn Paiwand has described reports about a catastrophe with over 1,000 dead in the Salang tunnel north of Kabul as "a product of pure fantasy." In a conversation with the ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG of Mainz, to be published in the Thursday edition and pre-released to DPA, Paiwand pointed to earlier reports, such as the shooting at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul, the destruction of a dam by rebels and the alleged killing of the present prime minister, all of which proved to be untrue.

AFP: TUNNEL DISASTER ATTRIBUTED TO RESISTANCE

BK101718 Hong Kong AFP in English 1706 GMT 10 Nov 82

[By Michel Martin-Roland]

[Text] Islamabad, Nov 10 (AFP) -- The Salang pass tunnel disaster, in which more than 1,000 Soviet soldiers and Afghan civilians may have died, was being attributed today to the Afghan resistance.

In Rawalpindi, the exile Afghan News Agency (ANA) reported the accident was caused by two mines laid by the mujahidin. In Peshawar, a farmer who claims to have witnessed the accident said people in the Salang region were convinced the accident was caused by mujahidin, as were local Afghan officials.

No resistance spokesman here has confirmed this theory, and some have denied it.

A Western diplomatic source estimates that more than 1,000 Afghan civilians and Soviet troops suffocated in the fire in the tunnel, the main pass through the Hindukush mountains linking Kabul with northern Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

But the farmer put the fatalities at 500 Soviet troops and at least 160 Afghans. He said they died because Soviet guards had blocked the tunnel exists, thinking they were dealing with a resistance attack.

Reports vary as to when the accident occurred. The farmer thinks it was October 30, diplomats say November 2 or 3, and ANA says that mines planted by the mujahidin exploded on Nov. 2 under a military convoy.

According to the farmer, the tunnel reopened four days after the accident.

Informed Afghans here note that the Kabul highway leading to the Soviet frontier has several times been mined by the resistance, and a Salang district resistance leader belonging to the Jami'at-e Eslami Party has sent a message to Peshawar suggesting that a group of unidentified mujahidin mined the tunnel. The action, he said, had been planned for some time.

Western diplomatic sources here have expressed no opinion as to the cause of the accident. They say that according to some reports circulating in Kabul, a tanker truck and the lead vehicle in a Soviet Army convoy collided at full speed, causing a massive pileup. According to other reports, they say, the tanker exploded, causing a fire.

'COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES' HIT; WEAPONS SEIZED

LD091622 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1430 GMT 9 Nov 82

[Text] Officers and troops of the operational and mountain battalions of the Balkh Province sarandoy command and of the revolution defenders have crushed a number of counterrevolutionary elements who for some time have been distrupting the peaceful life of the [name indistinct] village, (Nahr-e Shahi) district, Balkh Province. A number of them have been capture.

A spokesman for the Balkh Province sarandoy command said: Weapons, assorted ammunition and incriminating documents showing their links with counterrevolutionary bands abroad were seized.

According to a report from the Nangarhar Province security force, a band of counter-revolutionary elements -- these enemies of the progress and prosperity of the people -- along with their ringleaders, 'Ali Gol and Saheb, was crushed and assorted weapons were seized.

According to another report from Feyzabad, Badakhshan Province, a number of other traitors to the revolution and rebels recently were crushed in the Farah desert, Barak subdistrict, by the revolution defenders with the cooperation of the local toiling people. A number of these counterrevolutionaries were arrested.

A quantity of weapons was seized from these criminals.

TRIBAL AFGHANS PROTEST CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

BK101049 Hong Kong AFP in English 1407 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, Nov. 10 (AFP) -- Hundreds of Afghans from the Shinwari, Mehmand and Zazi tribes demonstrated in Kabul last Sunday against the Soviet-backed Afghan regime's drive to recruit tribesmen for the Afghan Army, travellers arriving here told rebels today.

According to the rebel-run Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), about 300-400 Shinwari, Mehmand and Zazi tribesmen assembled in downtown Kabul to protest the conscription campaign launched by the regime to beef up its desertion-plagued army, which is fighting tribal resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

"We here never, and we will never be part of the army," they chanted while the Afghan troops watched the protestors, AIP said. It said Afghan soldiers did not take action. The rally dispersed without any violence, Western diplomatic sources said.

The Shinwari tribes staged a similar protest in Paktia Province last month, following which the government "temporarily" stopped drafting tribesmen.

Sunday's reported demonstration contradicted a recent Kabul radio broadcast that the Shinwari tribe had pledged full support to the regime's pro-communist stance, Afghan analysts said.

The demonstrators marched into Kabul's Sar-Chowk and Shoba bazaar areas, where all private transport came to a standstill. Mehmand and Shinwari tribesmen, divided between Pakistan and Afghanistan, run most of the passenger transport service in the two countries.

Shopkeepers in Shoba bazaar also joined the protest and closed down their shops, the agency said. It said Zazis with strong influence in Shoba bazaar were continuing the protest.

Meanwhile, the battalion commander of Afghan troops based in Kabul defected from the army and joined Moslem freedom fighters on November 1, according to a spokesman for the Islamic alliance of Afghan mujahidin.

Commander Mohammed Raza had been secretary cooperating with Moslem rebels for a long time, the spokesman said, adding that the Soviet KGB secret service and the Afghan intelligence "KHAD" had placed him under surveillance and that this prompted his defection. Commander Raza had belonged to the 14th Battalion of the 219 Kabul Regiment.

According to several estimates, the strength of once 90,000-strong Afghan Army has dropped to nearly 25,000 since the communist coup in Afghanistan in December, 1979.

BRIEFS

CSSR LEGAL AGREEMENT -- A protocol on exchanging documents of the friendship and cooperation treaty, an agreement on legal assistance in civil and penal areas and a consular agreement between the DRA and CSSR which was signed in Prague during the visit by Babrak Karmal, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee and president of the DRA Revolutionary Council, to that country, was concluded and exchanged today between Shah Mohammad Dost, minister of foreign affairs, and Vaclacv Kouba, ambassador and representative extraordinary of the CSSR to Kabul in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The substance of these agreements, after the documents have been exchanged between both sides, will be implemented. [Text] [Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 8 Nov 82 LD]

GANDHI, HIDAYATULLAH COMMENT ON BREZHNEV DEATH

BK111312 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev is dead. Radio Moscow announced that Brezhnev, who was 75, died yesterday morning. He had been in poor health for some years and the end was sudden.

One of the architects of detente and Indo-Soviet friendship, Leonid Ilich Brezhnev was born in a worker's family almost 11 years before the October Revolution. He began his career as an engineer and was associated with the Soviet Communist Party from an early age. When Hitler's Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Brezhnev joined the army and heroically fought the war up to the very end. After the war, Brezhnev was connected with economic reconstruction of his country and helped in the development of industries and in bringing virgin land in Kazakhstan under the plow to boost Soviet agricultural output.

Brezhnev succeeded Khrushchev in 1964 as the general secretary of the party and also held the post of president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. For 18 long years, he directed Soviet policy, strengthening unity among the socialist countries and pioneering the policy of detente and the concept of peaceful coexistence. The strategic arms limitation treaty, the European security conference and the normalization of relations with the West were some of his monumental achievements. Under his stewardship, the Soviet Union has become one of the foremost military, industrial and economic powers in the world.

Brezhnev had established warm personal relations with successive Indian leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Mrs Gandhi. He visited India thrice, the latest in January 1981. He was of the opinion that friendship between India and the Soviet Union constituted a strong stabilizing factor in Asia and in the international situation.

Top Soviet leaders had a meeting today, reportedly, to discuss the question of electing a successor to Brezhnev.

Vice President Hidayatullah has said the death of Brezhnev has left us in utter gloom. In a condolence message, he said India has lost a true friend.

In her tribute, the prime minister said in the death of Brezhnev the world has lost an outstanding statesman; the Soviet Union, a great architect; and the people of India, a valued friend. His life was one of unusual dedication. Mrs. Gandhi said the Soviet leader directed the strength and creative spirit of his countrymen toward peace and the task of ensuring a world where nations can live in amity. The prime minister said Indo-Soviet friendship and cooperation grew and achieved maturity during President Brezhnev's time. He showed consistent understanding of our problem and stood by us in our moments of need.

President Singh's Condolences

BK111404 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1330 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] In a condolence message, President Zail Singh expressed deep grief over the passing away of President Leonid Brezhnev. He said Brezhnev was a great statesman and leader of the Soviet people and good friend of India. The world will miss his towering presence and sense of mission to promote peace and detente. Brezhnev's extremely valuable contribution to the Indo-Soviet friendship and cooperation will always be remembered in our country.

Political Parties' Tribute

BK111622 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Excerpts] It has been announced in Moscow that Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev is dead. The death of the Soviet leader occurred at 0830 yesterday morning.

The Government of India has announced that the national flag will be flown half-mast in New Delhi and state capitals tomorrow and the day after as a mark of respect to the Soviet leader.

Several political parties and leaders in India have paid tribute to Brezhnev. The congress working committee said he was a statesman of high stature. He had dedicated efforts for the cause of detente; he left a mark in our times. The committee expressed its appreciation to Brezhnev's contribution to the strengthening of Indo-Soviet friendship.

The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of India said Brezhnev made a historic contribution to the cause of communism in the USSR and cohesion of socialist system of states. The Politburo of the Communist Party of India-Marxist referred to Brezhnev's death as a loss to humanity as a whole. Chitta Bosu, general secretary of the Forward Bloc, said the world has lost an untiring fighter for peace. Chandrajit Yadav of Janvadi Party described Brezhnev as India's best friend.

STATES URGED 'TO BE WATCHFUL' OF AKALI EXTREMISTS

BK111636 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] The center has asked the governments of Punjab, Haryana Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan to have proper coordination among themselves and exchange information regarding the Akali extremists.

At a meeting held in New Delhi today to review the overall law and order situation, Home Secretary T.N. Chaturvedi asked these states to be watchful about the activities of the extremists and take appropriate measures to deal with them. However, they should ensure that no genuine person coming to the capital for the ASIAD is put to inconvenience. He told them to take all precautionary measures and to explain to the people the issues involved. The meeting was attended by the lieutenant governor of Delhi, senior officials of the Home Ministry and the chief secretaries of Punjab and Haryana and the inspectors general of police of these four states.

Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh met the prime minister in New Delhi today. He told newsmen later that he discussed with Mrs Gandhi the situation in the state and steps being taken to face the threat of the Akali agitation. He said he would welcome a negotiated settlement to bring the crisis to an early end. Darbara Singh also called on the home minister and discussed with him the law and order situation in the state.

The president of the Janvadi Party, Chandrajit Yadev, has urged the Akali leaders to postpone their proposed agitation. Talking to newsmen in New Delhi today, he urged the Akalis to disassociate themselves from the extremists and come to the negotiating table.

Rajiv Gandhi has deployed the proposed agitation by Akalis during the Asian games. He asked his party workers to see that such efforts do not succeed. Addressing a meeting of the Congress-I workers in New Delhi, he said the prestige of the country is involved in holding the games smoothly.

The Punjab government has denied press reports that arrest warrants have been issued against certain prominent Akali leaders to prevent them from going to Delhi to hold demonstrations on the 19th of this month. A spokesman of the state government described these reports as baseless and unfounded.

AFP: NEW DELHI TO BE SEALED OFF DURING GAMES

BK111224 Hong Kong AFP in English 1212 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] New Delhi, Nov 11 (AFP) -- The Indian capital will be sealed off during the Asian games, due to open here next week, to prevent the entry of military Sikhs, a federal Interior Ministry official said today. The Sikhs have announced they would disrupt the event to draw international attention to their autonomy demand for Punjab state.

The official confirmation that all approach roads to New Delhi will be sealed came after senior federal security and intelligence officials met here to give approval to an unprecedented security plan, the official said.

POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVES ON VISIT

BK100901 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] Polish Foreign Minister Stefan Olzsowski, who arrived in New Delhi this morning, says he will discuss with the Indian leaders bilateral and international matters during his stay. He told newsmen at the airport that he is happy to be in India and that his visit will bring about concrete results in the India-Polish economic cooperation.

Earlier, he was given a warm reception by Energy Minister Shiv Shankar and senior officials when he arrived on a 5-day visit.

Energy Development Discussed

BK101607 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] The visiting foreign minister of Poland, Stefan Olzsowski, has said that his country is keen on taking part in India's program of energy development. He told Energy Minister Shiv Shankar in New Delhi today that Poland can be of help, particularly in setting up small-size thermal powerplants.

Shiv Shankar recalled the long-standing cooperation between the two countries and referred to the agreement reached on many matters concerning trade and technical assistance during the India-Polish joint commission meeting held in Warsaw recently.

The Polish foreign minister arrived in New Delhi today on a 5-day visit.

Meeting With Rao

BK120529 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] In New Delhi today, Foreign Minister of Poland Stefan Olszowski discussed with External Affairs Minister Narasimha Rao the international situation. Olszowski is on a 5-day visit to India. He is scheduled to discuss bilateral matters with Narasimha Rao tomorrow. As a mark of respect to Brezhnev, the dinner which Narasimha Rao was to host in honor of the visiting foreign minister tonight, has been cancelled.

ZIA SENDS CONDOLENCE MESSASE ON BREZHNEV'S DEATH

BK111552 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] President Gen Mohammad Ziaul Haq has expressed condolences over the death of Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev. In a message to the Presidium of the Soviet Union's Supreme Soviet, the president expressed his condolences on behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan and on his own behalf. He said: We are equal partners in your sorrow.

He said the late president will be remembered as a great son of the Soviet Union who courageously endeavored during the darkest years of World War II to defend his country and who added a glorious chapter in the great struggle of the Soviet people in protecting independence and national sovereignty.

President Gen Mohammad Ziaul Haq said Brezhnev led the Soviet Union for nearly 2 decades, dedicating all his expertise and capability to the service of his nation. The departed soul's name surely will be prominent in Soviet history. He said efforts by Brezhnev as an international statesmen in connection with arms limitation have generated a ray of hope in the present era of tension and confrontation. The president said we equally share the Soviet people's grief caused by the irreparable loss due to the death of their great leader. The president also expressed sympathy on behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan for Mrs Brezhnev and other members of the bereaved family.

WOMEN PROTEST OVER MRS BHUTTO MEDICAL TREATMENT

BK101423 Hong Kong AFP in English 1405 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Excerpt] Karachi, Nov. 10 (AF) -- Small groups of women demonstrated here today to protest government delays in granting the widow of former Prime Minister Ali Bhutto permission to seek treatment for suspected cancer abroad.

Police rounded up about two dozen women who had gathered outside the governor's house waiving banners and chanting slogans against the military regime of President Mohammad Ziaul Haq.

Another group of women protestors, led by Pakistani feminist Begum Asghari Rahim, was intercepted in downtown Karachi and detained for several hours.

Bhutto Condition 'Serious'

BK101558 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] The condition of Mrs Nusrat Bhutto is reported to be serious. According to her doctors, she fainted twice today and was gasping for breath when she was taken to an intensive care unit at a hospital in Karachi. She is suffering from suspected lung cancer.

Board Agrees to Treatment

BK120311 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 12 Nov 82

[Text] In Pakistan, the medical board which examined Mrs Nusrat Bhutto has agreed to recommend to the government to allow her to go abroad for treatment of suspected lung cancer. This was stated by the personal physician to Mrs Bhutto in Karachi after the meeting of the medical board last night.

BANGLADESH

ERSHAD, CHOWDHURY SEND CONDOLENCES ON BREZHNEV

BK111722 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] Chief Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen H.M. Ershad has expressed deep condolences at the death of President Brezhnev. In a message of condolence to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, he said the news of the death of Brezhnev has been received in Bangladesh with profound sorrow. General Ershad said that during his long leadership Brezhnev undoubtedly influenced the course of development in the Soviet Union as well as in the outside world. He expressed sincere sympathy to the government and the people of the Soviet Union.

President Assanuddin Chowdhury in his message expressed deep sorrow at the passing of the Soviet leader.

NEPAL

LEADERS MEET WITH BANGLADESH'S ERSHAD 10 NOV

BK101539 Katmandu External Service in English 1450 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Excerpts] His majesty the king received in audience Lt Gen Hussain Mohammad Ershad, president of the Council of Ministers of Bangladesh, at the Narainhati Royal Palace this afternoon.

Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lt Gen H.M. Ershad, president of the Council of Ministers of Bangladesh, had official talks lasting more than an hour this afternoon on bilateral, regional and international matters of mutual interest. Both the Nepalese and Bangladesh sides found very close identity and similarity of views and [words indistinct] closer contacts and regular exchange of views at the highest level.

Bangladesh's additional foreign secretary and joint secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs briefed newsmen after the talks at the prime minister's office. They also discussed the question of harnessing water resources through bilateral and regional efforts, they told newsmen. Nepal in principle is committed to the development of water resources through regional cooperation. Bangladesh is fully conscious of Nepal's interests which must be safeguarded, Bangladesh additional foreign secretary told newsmen.

The joint economic commission constituted by Bangladesh and Nepal will have its fourth meeting early next year in Katmandu. The two sides were also known to have discussed areas of cooperation between the two countries under the commission.

Gen Ershad was joined by Foreign Minister Shamsud Doha; Agriculture Minister Obaidullah Khan; Maj Gen (Ghulam Dastagir); Bangladesh Ambassador Abdul Bari; and additional foreign secretary. Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa was joined in by Finance Minister Yadav Prasad Pant; Foreign Minister Padama Bahadur Khatri; Royal Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Gehendra Bahadar Rajbhandari; the finance and foreign secretaries.

Earlier in the morning, the president of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Lt Gen Hossain Mohammad Ershad, was accorded a warm welcome by Prime Minister Suryabahadur Thapa when he arrived in Katmandu on a 3-day official visit to Nepal.

SRI LANKA

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CHALLENGED IN SUPREME COURT

BK121413 Hong Kong AFP in English 1400 GMT 12 Nov 82

[Text] Colombo, Nov 12 (AFP) -- The election of President Junius Jayewardene last month, for a second term of six years, has been challenged in the Supreme Court, reports said here today.

The runner-up in the first-ever presidential election Hector Kobbekaduwa, candidate from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), led by former Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike yesterday filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the election.

(Meanwhile, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today in Delhi the SLFP had put together a common front of opposition parties to oppose the referendum next month, which seeks a mandate for the present Parliament to continue in power. A SLFP joint statement today demanded the current state of emergency should be ended before the proclamation for the referendum, which is expected on November 17, PTI added.)

The government decided only last Wednesday to continue the emergency which President Jayawardene declared last month at the end of polling in the presidential election.

In his petition to the Supreme Court Mr Kobbekaduwa accused the trade minister, as an agent of President Jayewardene or with his knowledge, of committing a corrupt practice by making or publishing a false statement about his party.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BREZHNEV'S DEATH

GF111813 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the Communist Party and chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, died yesterday at the age of 75 [as heard].

A few days ago, Brezhnev attended the annual celebrations of the October Revolution with other Soviet leaders.

The CPSU Central Committee, which did not announce Brezhnev's death until 24 hours later, announced that Brezhnev died of a heart attack yesterday.

FOREIGN MINISTRY CONDEMNS U.S.-MOROCCO MANEUVERS

LD111150 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] American imperialism, continuing its warmongering policies and strengthening the military capability of the mercenary and subservient regimes in the region, has started joint maneuvers of U.S. Marines and Moroccan forces on the northern coasts of Morocco. Concerning this issue, the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of our country said:

These maneuvers take place in the context of the strategic treaty between the Moroccan regime and American imperialism, and its goal is to pave the way for further American influence in the region. The maneuvers are a link in the chain of the America's war-seeking policies for suppressing the uprising of the oppressed and Muslim people of the region, especially the countries in North Africa, the Persian Gulf and the Sahara. Now -- when as the result of the victories of the fighters of Islam the American mercenary Saddam, has been dragged toward certain downfall -- through such maneuvers America wants to strengthen its position and to give encouragement to its other mercenaries.

He added: The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns these maneuvers which are staged in connection with the suppressive agreement between America and Morocco, according to which American forces are allowed to use Morocco as an operational and command base in cases where American interests are endangered in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran asks Muslim nations not to allow America to stage such warmongering maneuvers in their country and to oppose them.

KHAMENE'I ATTENDS 10 NOVEMBER CABINET SESSION

LD102350 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] The Central News Unit reports that the Islamic Republic of Iran Cabinet held a session today in the presence of President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i.

The new Cabinet ministers -- Messrs Khatami, Islamic guidance minister; Rafiqdust, Islamic Revolution Guards Corps minister, and Izeh'i, minister of state and head of the state welfare organization -- were present. Colonel Salimi, defense minister, and Rafiqdust, Islamic Revolution Guards Corps minister, submitted reports to the Cabinet on the latest news from the battlefronts and the recent victories of the army of Islam over the Saddamist blasphemy. Oil Minister Gharazi then submitted a detailed report to the Cabinet on the [word indistinct] oil installations which were captured by the brave forces of Islam during recent operations. The governors-general of Kordestan and Western Azarbayjan Provinces also were present and submitted reports on these provinces to the Cabinet.

Interview on Meeting

LD111728 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 11 Nov 82

[President Khamene'i interview after 10 November Cabinet session -- recorded]

[Text] [Question] Mr President, in view of the participation of the three new ministers in tonight's Cabinet session, please let us know the reasons for your participation in this Cabinet meeting?

[Answer] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. From time to time, I attend Cabinet meetings. Naturally, this year I also attended some sessions although I have not attended it for some time. Of course, the presence of the three new ministers was also one reason: to get to know the gentlemen. Although they are among our friends, we also met the gentlemen at work and it was very good.

Of course, tonight, we discussed the sensitive and important issue of the inhabited Kur ish regions; Kurdestan Province and Western Azarbayjan. The governors general of the regions participated in the Cabinet session and they had some [words indistinct] and some problems. They described the needs of the regions' people to the Cabinet members. There is great (?motivation) for work in these regions. Both the members of the Cabinet and all other officials are anxious to work for the Kurdish brothers in these regions because, unfortunately, due to the presence of counterrevolutionaries in this region, only a small part of government services has reached the Kurdish inhabited region. The governors general of the region came to the Cabinet meeting with a great deal of zeal, enthusiasm and motivation and discussed what services can be rendered there and what issues should be dealt with from the economic, cultural and political points of view. It was an important issue. I also had some experiences and information and it was necessary for me to take part in the session. Thank God, it was a good session and some good decisions were made.

[Question] Please let us know if you have any details about combatting the counterrevolutionaries in these two regions.

[Answer] Concerning the fighting against the counterrevolutionaries, today we are in the best position compared to the last 3 or 4 years. The counterrevolution has no popular base in the the region and the sovereignty of the government in the region is established. Two or three important axes from which the counterrevolution used to receive military assistance and from where it laid ambushes and attacked the cities have come under government control. That is, some of them have come under government control and some are being mopped up and brought under government control, the most important of which is Piranshahr-Sar Dasht axis where the government forces have reached the final stages and very soon this axis will be mopped up.

With the mopping up of these axes, a large number of villages and some important towns will come under the control of the people themselves, as they have not been under the control of the people so far. They have been under the control of counterrevolutionary parties and groups who, inspired by foreign elements and major world counterrevolutionaries, were working there and were oppressing and pressuring the people and were weakening government sovereignty. In any case, fortunately, our military brothers -- namely both the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps and the Armed Forces -- and the gendarmerie are busy doing fundamental things. We hope that these moves will be carried out successfully and that the people of this region will be released from the heavy load of the counterrevolutionaries, which they have had to endure the past 3 or 4 years. If this is done, then the government will be able to implement services to the people without any anxiety. Thank God, tonight we had some good discussions on this issue.

[Question] In your view, what has the attitude of world mass media been concerning the fighters of Islam recently?

[Answer] Of course, the victories that have taken place on the battlefields were reported unwillingly, of course, not in complete form. However, as long as world mass media is under the control of Zionism and under the domination and influence of the Americans, we should not expect what takes place in Iran to be fully reported in the world. The few famous news agencies of the world are not very happy with us. They are not very fond of our revolution; they are under the influence of the Zionists and Americans. This is a fact which we witness. Of course, at times, they report certain things but they are not reported correctly.

In the region, also, the countries around us have not reported the issues in a just way, as one expects an information agency to do. We also are not interested in such propaganda. We are doing our own work. We have fixed our gaze upon a just fact and we are moving toward that target. We hope God will assist us. Now, whether this propaganda accords with our desire, it will have no effect upon our work.

[Question] Thank you very much.

MAJLIS OIL COMMITTEE MEETS 10 NOVEMBER

GF101758 Tehran IRNA in English 1627 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] Tehran, Nov. 10, IRNA -- The Majlis oil committee met this morning to discuss and evaluate activities of refineries throughout Iran. The session was attended by Oil Minister Mohammad Gharazi, executives and a number of staff of refineries.

Speaking to IRNA after the meeting, Gharazi said that at present output of the country's refineries has increased to 670,000 barrels per day. He further added that steps were underway to expand refineries.

The new head of the Majlis oil committee, deputy from Bakhtaran, Seyyed Zedeh, stressed importance of oil on world economy and said that in absence of oil capitalist economies would not be able to function. If oil producing countries made a proper use of oil soon superpowers would be forced to kneel down, he said.

IRNA CITES OFFICIAL'S REMARKS IN DAMASCUS

LD101128 Tehran IRNA in English 0934 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] Damascus, Nov. 10 IRNA -- Political Undersecretary at the Iranian Foreign Ministry Hoseyn Shaykh ol-Eslam said here Tuesday that at present 10 Iraqi cities were within the range of fire of Iranian forces but Imam Khomeyni had not allowed shooting of a single bullet towards them while Iranian cities were under continuous fire of Iraqi artillery.

Speaking at a press conference at the end of his tour to Syria, Shaykh ol-Eslam said that the weapons, of over one billion dollars, had been seized from Iraq during the Moharram operation (started on Nov. 1), which would be used against the Zionist regime.

Asked how Iran would overthrow the present Iraq regime while it had announced that it would not occupy Iraqi territory, the Foreign Ministry official noted that according to the Islamic Republic's Constitution, Iran was not allowed to interfere in other state's internal affairs. But, he added, the Islamic revolution was not confined to the Iranians and that the overthrow of Saddam's regime was a task of Iraqi people as well as a duty of every Muslim.

He said that with the execution of four ministers and two military commanders, Saddam Husayn had transferred his sanity from warfronts to inside Iraq which was an indication of his imminent downfall. [sentence as received]

Referring to the numerous Iraqi POWs in Iran, Shaykh ol-Eslam stressed that they were mostly dispatched to battlefronts by force and since their objective was to fight with the Zionist enemy and not the Islamic Republic, they would surrender voluntarily. Whoever assisted Saddam Husayn in the war, would share the same fate, he remarked.

Shaykh ol-Eslam said the allegations by the U.S. and the Zionist regime against the Islamic Republic were false and futile, adding that after the victory of the revolution Iran's relations with the Zionist regime and the flow of oil to that country were cut off and the Zionist embassy in Tehran was turned to the embassy of Palestine.

As for future relations between Iran and Lebanon, the political undersecretary at the Iranian Foreign Ministry reiterated that the Islamic Republic attached special importance to Lebanon and had declared that the Zionist regime should evacuate all Arab occupied lands. He stressed that there was only one place for the Zionists and that was "hell."

He said his tour to Syria had been very fruitful, describing existing ties between the two countries as being excellent. The talks were focused on the matters to confront the U.S. conspiracies which were taking shape at a wide range in the region, he added.

Shaykh ol-Eslam stressed that the Islamic Republic believed that the present tension was a prelude for the overt U.S. presence in the region thus advising all the states not to take part in the U.S. plots. Saddam, he added, had also the objective to assist the U.S. to preserve the tension in this part of the world.

The Islamic Republic, Shaykh ol-Eslam noted, was willing to have good relations with all its neighbouring countries provided that they would realise the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic and avoid helping Saddam.

ARMED FORCES JOINT STAFF ISSUES COMMUNIQUES

Communique No 1,117

LD101734 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Communique No 1,117 of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, those self-sacrificing warriors of the path of truth and justice with the power of the Islamic faith, are delivering repeated and fatal blows to the Saddamist warmongers.

In continuation of the Moharram operations, the justice-seeking Islamic combatants are fully consolidating their newly-won positions, are in full control of the enemy forces and are smashing their scattered resistance. Our forces' artillery fire in this region has disrupted all movements and activities of the Saddamist forces and our forces bravely have defended their own positions.

In the western operational sector, our forces returned enemy fire and inflicted some losses and damage. Our forces' heavy weapon fire destroyed one machinegun with its crew and one ammunition depot of the aggressors. Several of Saddam's troops were killed or wounded.

The Islamic forces' engineering units in this region pursue their task of discovering and defusing various types of mines planted by the enemy.

Our forces stationed on the banks of the Arvand Rud yesterday opened fire on enemy positions on the other side of the river, destroying several Iraqi trenches and observation posts. Movement by the Iraqi forces along the Al-Faw-Basra highway also was halted.

The filthy Saddamist criminals yesterday opened heavy artillery fire on residential districts in Abadan. Ten houses were demolished; there was severe damage. This crime was committed at a time when the enemy's residential areas are within firing range of the Islamic combatants, yet they refuse to pound them.

[Signed] The Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Communique No 1,118

LD111736 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Communique No 1,118 of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. At 1031 today, another invading Iraqi aircraft was downed in the Moharram operational zone by the fire of air defense units of the Air Force of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This brings the total number of Iraqi aircraft downed during the Moharram operations to 13.

Following fruitless and repeated offensives launched by Saddam's defeated forces on 9 and 10 November in the Moharram operational zone and repulsed by our forces, the victorious valiant fighters of Islam yesterday continued their triumphant Moharram operations and took over new positions in [word indistinct] region. Our forces captured hill 175, inflicting heavy and effective blows and casualties on the enemy. Exchanges of fire continued during the last 24 hours in the Abadan region between the Gendarmerie valiants and the mercenary Iraqi Ba'thists. Our combatants directed their fire across the Arvand Rud on the Iraqi positions, destroying five enemy trenches and bunkers and silencing the aggressors' fire. Our forces also halted Iraqi movement on the Basra-Al-Faw road.

Sporadic battles and exchanges of fire continued yesterday on most of the western fronts. These exchanges were more intense on the Meymak front. The able and powerful combatants of Islam, directing their fire on the enemy positions and units in those fronts, inflicted casualties and losses on the forces of Saddam and succeeded in capturing three bunkers and one mortar, destroying their occupants.

At 2000 on 9 November, Iraqi mercenaries stationed in the Sumar region were on the verge of launching an offensive to advance but were countered bravely by the combatants of Islam. The Iraqis suffered heavy losses and casualties and were stopped where they had been stationed.

The cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr yesterday were fired on by the criminal Saddam forces. In Abadan, a few houses were damaged and two civilians were injured. In Khorramshahr, in addition to some damage, a few civilians were severely injured.

Saddam's mercenary invading aircraft, violating the airspace in the country's south and western border regions, were repulsed by our air defense units and the air force's fighter aircraft and the Iraqi aggressor aircraft were driven off.

[Signed] The Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

IRAQ'S AL-FAW PIER SET ABLAZE 9 NOVEMBER

GF101730 Tehran IRNA in English 1642 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] Ahvaz, Nov 10, IRNA -- The Al-Faw pier of Iraq, in the Persian Gulf, was set ablaze by the accurate fire of the Iranian defenders Tuesday night.

Reports reaching here from the southern fronts added that fire exchanges persisted between the two sides on the Arvand River banks over the past 24 hours.

In these battlefronts, the Islamic forces destroyed 10 Iraqi group bunkers, four dug-outs, one munitions depot and one machine gun as well as killing at least 15 aggressors and checking the Iraqi vehicles movements on the Al-Faw-Basra logistical route. The Iraqi long-range artillery fire hit some houses and caused fires in three sectors of Abadan during Tuesday.

IRNA REPORTS ON FIGHTING IN WESTERN FRONTS

GF101744 Tehran IRNA in English 1646 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] Bakhtaran, Nov 10, IRNA -- The Islamic combatants held the upper hand during fire exchanges in the western fronts, particulary in Muslim ibn 'Aqil theatre over the 24 hours preceding Wednesday.

In these operations, a large munitions depot of the enemy was set ablaze and a considerable number of mines were defused in Muslim ibn 'Aqil theatre while, more than 22 Iraqis were killed and some others wounded in the other western fronts.

The Valliabad Garrison of Iraq was hit by the Iranian artillery fire which killed more than 16 enemy troops and wounded a number of others as well as smashing two Iraqi tanks, three vehicles and one machine gun on Tuesday.

In the Iraqi regions of Panjwin, Buban and Nahr Sadiq, the enemy's fire was halted as the fire of the Iranian troops destroyed two Iraqi vehicles and several bunkers during the same day.

On Monday, the Iranian artillery shelling pounded the enemy's positions near the Garmuk Garrison of Iraq setting ablaze one munitions depot and disabling four vehicles.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi fighter plane, which violated Ilam's air space at 13:15 hours local time Wednesday, was immediately repulsed by the Iranian air defence units.

LAND 'LIBERATED,' PUMPING STATIONS CAPTURED

LD111858 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 11 Nov 82

[Text] Following the third phase of the victorious Moharram operation, the conquerors of Islam brought under their full control in the course of a series of coordinated operations yesterday morning 35 sq km of the occupied (Dashtahiyeh), strategic height No 175 and another oil pumping station, situated to the south of the Moharram operation zone, of the falling Saddamist regime.

According to frontline reports by correspondents of the Islamic Republic News Agency, the strong combatants of the army of Islam -- with the Blessings of the holy month of her holiness Zaynab, peace be upon her -- attacked the defeated enemy on the most southern axis of the Moharram operational zone in yesterday morning's battle and by chasing and pursuing the enemy forces, the combatants of the army of Islam managed to liberate 35 of the occupied (Dashtahiyeh) from the 25-month long occupation by Saddam's aggressors.

After fully providing for the security of the Rabut border post, the victorious forces of the army of Islam brought under their control in the same area the remnants of the strategic height No 175, which had been the assembly center for the fugitive forces of the Iraqi 24th Mechanized and 108th Armored Brigades.

In an interview with an Islamic Republic News Agency correspondent, the commander of the Karbala' Headquarters confirmed this matter: By controlling the liberated region in the vicinity of the Rabut post, the combatants of Islam also occupied three other pumping stations of the falling Saddamist regime. He added: With the stationing of the forces of Islam on Iraqi strategic height No 175, all the heights in the Moharram operational zone have been liberated from the occupation of the Saddamist mercenaries.

Another report from the Moharram operational zone by correspondents of the Islamic Republic News Agency states that in the course of another series of courageous operations carried ou in the northern region of the Iraqi Zubaydat district, which is under the control of the forces of Islam, a large part of the oil region of (Jalib Sina) in Iraq also was captured b the forces if Islam.

By positioning themselves in an area several kilometers from the north of the Bayat-Zubaydat highway, the combatants of Islam currently have brought the supply axis of this road under their full control and have blocked the communication lines of the enemy forces.

According to the latest reports from the Karbala' headquarters, the joint operations center of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic, heavy losses and casualties have been inflicted on the Iraqi Ba'thist enemy in the vicinities of the Rabut border post and (Dashtahiyeh). Large quantities of the enemy's armored equipment also have been destroyed or seized as booty and many of the remnants of the Iraqi brigades damaged in the early stages of the Moharram operation have been taken prisoner by the forces of Islam.

SECOND GROUP OF IRAQI POW'S ARRIVES IN TEHRAN

LD101202 Tehran IRNA in English 0927 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] Tehran, Nov 10 (IRNA) -- A second group of 650 Iraqi POWs captured in the recent victorious Moharram operations, arrived here this morning and were welcomed at the railway station by a crowd of Tehran's residents who chanted "Alla o akbar".

The first group of 800 POWs belonging to the same operation were transferred here last monday.

CAPTURED IRAQI COMMANDERS COMMENT ON LOSSES

LD102150 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Excerpts] Iraqi commanders and officers captured during the victorious Moharram operatio by the Islamic forces, in an interview with IRNA in Dezful this afternoon, denied claims by commanders of the Iraq 4th Army.

The commanders of the Iraqi 4th Army said that the Iraqi 423d, 616th, 60th and 24th Mechanized Brigades had not been destroyed.

Col ('Abd ar-Reza 'Abd al-Hadi 'Abdallah as-Sa'id) from the 606th Brigade, who was taken prisoner in the Bayat region by the Islamic forces, commented on the situation of the forces under his command: When I was taken prisoner, nothing was left of our forces, and 250 of the troops under my command had been killed or wounded; their bodies were scattered on the battlefield. The rest were taken prisoner by the Islamic forces.

The commander of the 423d Brigade, who was taken prisoner in the same region by the Islamic forces, said: During the Moharram operations, many of our soldiers were killed and the rest fled. He announced the names of several officers from his unit who were taken prisoner, adding: When the Islamic forces began their offensive and surrounded us from the rear, the brigade headquarters fell and was utterly destroyed. As a result, its battalions also were destroyed. All the prisoners confirm this point.

'OPPORTUNITY' TO BE SENT TO FRONT ANNOUNCED

LD101838 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] According to the Central News Unit, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps public relations office for the 10th district of the country [as heard] has announced:

All those brothers who have not had the opportunity to be dispatched to the front can present themselves to the department for dispatch of forces from the 10th district on Saturday, 13 November. The department is located in the place of the former U.S. den of espionage. These brothers should bring letters of introduction from the mobilization centers in various cities of the central province and other [words indistinct] mobilization regions.

MINISTER OUTLINES TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

GF011754 Tehran IRNA in English 1615 GMT 1 Nov 82

[Text] Tehran, Nov 1, IRNA -- In an interview with the weekly magazine SORUSH, Roads and Transportation Minister Mohammad Nezhad-Hoseyniyan outlined the activities of the ministry after the Islamic revolution and its future projects.

In the interview which was published in the last two issues of the magazine, he said that during the three years after the revolution, the ministry had switched its attention to the more deprived regions, for example in Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province there were only some 100 kms of asphalt roads. However, he added, although the ministry's progress in these regions was gradual, it had already achieved 20 times more compared to all the years prior to the revolution.

One problem in the way of road construction work in the deprived regions was that the executive groups and their engineers were not willing to spend their time in such places, rather they were more interested in other regions where they could be more comfortable, he said.

The minister gave the following figures indicating the activities of the Roads and Transportation Ministry in road construction after the Islamic revolution:

From March 21, 1979 through March 20, 1981, more than 460 kms of freeways were under construction, 220 kms of which were completed. The ministry can build 70 to 80 kms of freeways annually.

During the same period, more than 5,700 kms of main roads were under construction, 1,830 of which were completed.

During the same period, some 20,000 kms of rural roads were under construction, about 10,000 of which were completed.

During the same period, some 12,000 by-roads were under construction, 3,400 kms of which were completed.

All of the above figures, he added, were much higher than the activities during the last three years of the regime of the shah.

Nezhad-Hoseynian said that the government was not considering employing foreign contractors for its road construction requirements. This, he said, was primarily because there were still groups of Iranians who were currently unemployed in this field. Therefore, he added, plans would centre on activating Iranians who are capable of doing road construction work and then if there were still some work left to be done foreign contractors could be employed.

Concerning the ministry's machinery and equipment, he said that currently talks were continuing with the Japanese to acquire the needed technology in order to build machinery in Iran. He said the talks were part of a ten year plan to build, not assemble, road construction machinery in the country with the cooperation of the Heavy Industries Ministry within the next ten years. For now however, he said, a group, known as the self-sufficiency Jihad, has been established in the ministry to coordinate production of needed spare parts. So far some 300 parts had been reproduced by the committed workers, he said.

Speaking about the country's present and future port facilities, Nezhad-Hoseynian said that during the next few years the total number of piers in the country would reach 71.

One of the most important projects in this field, he added, was the Martyr Rajai'e Port in Bandar 'Abbas, southern Iran in Hormozgan Province. He said that the port will have an annual capacity of 16 million tons with 15 piers, 12 of which are now temporarily in operation. The port is being built with an estimated cost of 57 billion rials (about 650 million dollars), and he said that the construction was coming along very good. He said that 50 percent of the project had so far been completed.

Concerning other port construction plans, the minister said that plans for 14 small ports were prepared and three of them had been given to foreign contractors, who are due to begin construction. Two other ports will be built by Iranian contractors.

On railroad activities, Nezhad-Hoseynian said that the railroad from Bandar 'Abbas to Bafq (in Yazd Province) was at the top of the ministry's priority list. It will be a vital source of transportation, linking south-central Iran to the north, through Yazd, Kerman, Esfahan, and Tehran. The railroad has been divided into 15 sections, nine of which are currently under construction. Three of the remaining six sections are to be constructed by the railroad company temporarily and the other three are undergoing route changes. He said that the changes were necessary since it would require a seven kms tunnel which was difficult to build and manage.

In the air transportation field, the minister said that although much effort was being done to service the aircraft by Iranians, but, he said, foreigners in Iran in the past had not properly transferred their technical know-how to them. Therefore he said there were many problems in this respect but expressed hope that some of them could be eliminated in the future when the aeronautics scientific and technical school opens this year.

FREE VOICE OF IRAN ON MKO, KURDISH OPERATIONS

GF071926 (Clandestine) Free Voice of Iran in Persian to Iran 1500 GMT 7 Nov 82

[Text] According to our correspondent in Paris, the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization [MKO] in a statement issued today has outlined recent clashes between MKO and Kurdish fighters and the guards of the regime.

According to this statement, the Kurdish peshmarga and MKO members in a number of operations carried out in the Sar Dasht region last week destroyed the revolution guards' command headquarters in the area by using RPG-7's, bombs and submachineguns. The attacks destroyed all facilities and installations of the headquarters and 20 guards were killed while dozens of others were wounded.

The statement continues: Three guards of the regime were killed in Sanandaj in clashes with Kurdish peshmarga on 11 October.

MKO's statement adds: In recent months, over 50 prisoners have escaped from jails in the western parts of the country. In one case, three mojahed girls managed to escape from Kermanshah's Dizelabad Prison with the aid of two jailers who had joined the resistance forces and the Kurdish strugglers. However, two of the girls and the two guards were arrested and shot on the spot. In a mass escape from the same jail on 15 August, 35 mojaheds and 5 guards who helped them fled. Other escapes were from jails in Iranshahr, Maragheh and Zanjan. Most of the escapes were planned according to instructions from outside the prisons.

Gurgan Clashes

GF101840 (Clandestine) Free Voice of Iran in Persian to Iran 1500 GMT 10 Nov 82

[Text] According to a report by our correspondent in Paris, the offices of Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization in the city has reported on some of the [illegible]ns of its members in a statement. According to this statement during an upri[illegible]illagers in the first week of Aban in Gurgan's Fazelabad area -- a wooded region in northeastern Iran -- six mercenary guards of Khomeyni were wounded in clashes with the people. The guards intended to confiscate the cotton harvest of the farmers [illegible]t instead were met with resistance.

In an armed clash which occurred on 26 October, Mohammad Reza Shahini, one of the Khomeyni regime's agents of suppression and execution, was killed in Gurgan.

AFGHAN MUJAHIDIN DOWNS MIG 29 OCTOBER

GF081630 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1430 GMT 8 Nov 82

[Text] The Afghan mujahidin downed a MiG fighter belonging to the DRA Army in Baghman, north of Kabul, on 29 October. The Muslim Afghan mujahidin also succeeded in occupying a military coal mine control post in (Karak) area, in Harat Province, in northwestern Afghanistan. They captured in this operation 2 tanks, 4 carriers and 100 weapons. All the soldiers of this post surrendered to the Afghan mujahidin.